



Approximately 43.5 million people in the US have provided unpaid care to an adult or child in the last 12 months. [National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP (2015).]

The value of a family caregiver is beyond measure.

But someone has tried to measure. 😊

It has been calculated that if all the family caregivers quit, it would cost the US over \$470 billion! [in 2013-AARP Public Policy Institute (2015).]



Help Prevent Caregiver Burnout

Providing care for an aging or disabled loved one might be one of the hardest jobs you will ever do. Assisting with daily cares such as dressing, grooming and bathing, maneuvering through the maze of medical and social services, or watching your loved one lose his/her independence are all very difficult tasks. The changes in your personal, social, and work life may leave you feeling confused, unhappy, and frustrated. These stresses can pile up and negatively impact your physical and mental health. It is important to recognize when the frustrations you are feeling go beyond your ability to manage and into what is often called **caregiver burnout**.

Here are some warning signs of Caregiver Burnout:



- Being on the verge of tears or crying a lot
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Overreacting to minor nuisances
- Feeling constantly exhausted
- Withdrawing from social contacts
- Increasing use of alcohol or stimulants
- Change in eating or sleeping patterns
- Inability to relax
- Scattered thinking
- Feeling increasingly resentful
- Being short-tempered with care recipient frequently
- Increasing thoughts of death



If you know someone who takes care of another person and is exhibiting these signs, talk to them about it... if possible offer to help in some way. If you are the caregiver, you may not always recognize the signs of burnout in yourself but those close to you probably will. Be open to your friends' and families' feedback about how you are doing. Heed those warnings and find ways to reduce stress levels and make your caregiving tasks more manageable and enjoyable. Here are some suggestions:



- Participate in a support network. Find family and friends whom you can share joys and frustrations with
- Consult with a professional counselor for one-on-one counseling
- Attend a support group to receive positive feedback and coping strategies from others in similar situations
- Maintain good health by exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet
- Take regular time out for journaling, meditating or contemplation
- Stay involved in hobbies and activities you enjoy

When you understand and acknowledge that caregiving may leave you feeling stressed and anxious you are better able to protect yourself against caregiver burnout. The most important thing you can do prevent burnout and be an effective caregiver is to take care of yourself!

Are you a person who is helping someone else so they can stay in their home?

Help is available to you in many different ways:

- * 24 hour call in line - **Alzheimer's Association** (always answered by a person) 800-272-3900
- * **Free telephone learning sessions** (register ahead by calling 866-390-6491) different subjects each time. <http://caregiverteleconnection.org>
- * **Veterans Caregiver Support Line** 855-260-3274
- * Visit **Caregiver Connection** on Facebook
- * Online help from **AARP**: <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/>



Call the ADRC 920-386-3580

